

Chairman and Committee members my name is Dr. Marcus Johnson and I am President of the North Central Montana Physicians LLP. I would like to echo the testimony given by Ms. Meuchel regarding North Central Montana Physicians positive relationship with Benefis Healthcare and our desire to work in a strategic partnership to provide more inclusive cost effective insurance options for the Great Falls community. But as a physician in Great Falls and the surrounding area for more than 50 years I recognize the need for the community and the physicians to continue to have Benefis as a strong community hospital where we can refer our patients. For the majority of the physicians outside the Great Falls clinic we rely on Benefis as a place to work and take care of our patients. The COPA siphons funds away from patient care, which could be better used to expand or continue patient services to our community.

The COPA limits Benefis Healthcare's ability to work collaboratively with physicians to address the ever-changing dynamics of healthcare delivery. What may have worked 10 or even 5 years ago may no longer be a viable option for healthcare delivery today, yet through the COPA, Benefis is still tied to rules developed over a decade ago. The future of healthcare is about innovation of healthcare delivery, elimination of the COPA is necessary if Benefis and North Central Montana Physicians are to address that future.